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Laszlo Talks To God About Gifts Of Tribulation

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LASZLO TALKS TO GOD
ABOUT GIFTS OF TRIBULATION

Pat Brown

I've read Your stuff about the meek & the poor in spirit &
inheriting the earth & being comforted & so forth
and how he whom You would humble You first exalt &
whom You would exalt You humble first
and I think I catch Your drift —
but could You *please* just give it a rest?

I mean, I've been a sport all these years;
I've taken every pitch You've thrown.
Booster shots. Cod-liver oil. Wetting the bed.
Creamed spinach. Story problems. Aunt Sally's breath.
Time passed; it didn't let up.
Saturday cartoons pre-empted by catechism class.
Endless forests of broccoli. Glow-in-the-dark zits.
Nine pubic hairs, fourteen years old —
lotsa laffs in the locker-room!
That '55 Buick: its feeble transmission,
the cancerous fenders & clouds of blue smoke.
Prom night: tripping at the refreshment table,
landing in the punch. It just didn't let up.

And it doesn't seem to be letting up yet, does it, Chief?
I've paid my dues; exactly what more do You want?
What's the point of the bimbo next door
with her taste for bikers and feedback guitar &
primal screams at 3:00a.m.?
Or old man Scremp, glancing at his watch
as I come and go, reminding me I'm
below quota three months running?
My mother's thoughtful clippings about
schoolmates who've struck it rich?
The impenetrability of driver's license stations?
Dentists: their vigor, their zeal?

What I'm saying is, You've made Your point.
I'm humbled. I'm meek. My spirit is poor.
So when do I cash in?
Do You work this like a life insurance deal,
"payable upon the death of the insured"?
Is it like a pension, not due me 'til I'm sixty-five?
Maybe we could negotiate an advance;
it doesn't have to be the whole earth,
if I can have it now.
Miami, say, or the French Riviera —
or, fine, maybe just a condo by the lake.
I could swear I recall Someone saying . . . *blessed are*
they that hunger and thirst for justice,
for they shall have their fill . . .